

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

S E C R E T STATE 224101

FOLLOWING REPEATE SANTIAGO 8740 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BOGOTA LIMA
QUITO SEP 8.

QUOTE : S E C R E T SANTIAGO 8740

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PARM, MASS, SHUM, PE, CI

SUBJECT: CHILE AND THE PERUVIAN PURCHASE OF SOVIET AIRCRAFT

1. SUMMARY: REFTEL ASKED EMBASSIES TO SUGGEST THAT THE COUNTRIES OF THE ANDEAN REGION GET INTO SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS ON ARMS LIMITATION; NOTED THE USEFULNESS OF THEIR EXPRESSING TO PERU AS WELL AS TO THE US THEIR CONCERN OVER A SOVIET AIRCRAFT BUY; AND ASKED FOR THOUGHTS ON HOW TO DISSUADE PERU FROM MAKING THE PURCHASE. THE CHILEANS PERHAPS MORE THAN ANY OTHERS WOULD LIKE AN AGREEMENT ON ARMS LIMITATION, BUT THEY TELL US THAT BOLIVIA AS AREA HOST IS DELAYING THE CONVOCAION OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE ANDEAN ARMS LIMITATION GROUP. WE QUESTION THE USEFULNESS OF CONTINUING TO ASK THE CHILEANS TO WORK ON THE PERUVIANS DIRECTLY. THE USG MIGHT BE ABLE TO EXERT SOME INFLUENCE ON PERU THROUGH THE OTHER ANDEAN PACT MEMBERS, BUT WE ESTIMATE THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY TAKE A STRONG DIRECT US APPROACH TO TURN PERU AROUND--IF THAT CAN BE DONE AT ALL AND PROVIDED THE DECISION ON THE BUY IS STILL OPEN.

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END SUMMARY.

2. ARMS LIMITATION APPROACH: FONMINISTRY DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL AFFAIRS JORGE BERGUNO TOLD EMBOFF SEPTEMBER 1 THAT THE THIRD ROUND OF ANDEAN PACT REGIONAL ARMS LIMITATION TALKS IS STALLED. THE NEXT HOST IS BOLIVIA, AND LA PAZ APPEARS UNWILLING TO MOVE (SANTIAGO 3660). THE BOLIVIANS KNOW PERU WILL BE ISOLATED IN THE TALKS AND ARE UNHAPPY ABOUT BEING HOSTS WHEN THAT HAPPENS, SINCE THEY FEAR THEIR CORRIDOR TO THE SEA WOULD BE PREJUDICED THEREBY. BERGUNO SAID THE CHILEANS--STILL TASKED AS SECRETARY IN PREPARING FOR THE NEXT ROUND--ARE THINKING ABOUT SENDING OUT FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVES TO DRUM UP SUPPORT, BUT THEY ARE FRUSTRED BY THE LACK OF MOVEMENT.

3. IF THIS ACCOUNT IS ACCURATE, OBVIOUSLY THE ARMS TALKS ARE BECOMING MORE DIFFICULT AS THE INTERESTED PARTIES APPROACH THE HEART OF THIS MATTER, A NOT UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENT. UNLESS PERU'S COLLEAGUES ARE WILLING TO FORCE THE ISSUE, THE PROSPECTIVE PERUVIAN AIRCRAFT BUY WILL ONLY MAKE IT HARDER TO DEAL REALISTICALLY WITH BROADER ARMS LIMITATION.

4. CHILEAN DIRECT APPROACH TO PERU: THE CHILEANS SO FAR HAVE HANDLED THIS PROSPECTIVE PERUVIAN PURCHASE ASTUTELY. GENUINELY CONCERNED, THEY APPARENTLY SET THE PUBLICITY MACHINERY IN MOTION BY BREAKING THE STORY--BUT WITHOUT SHOWING THEIR HAND--AND PLAYING IT BACK TO SANTIAGO VIA WIRE SERVICE REPORTS. THEY HAVE AVOIDED OFFICIAL OR SIGNIFICANT EDITORIAL COMMENT AND HAVE KEPT UP THE NORMAL PLATITUDES OF GOOD WILL TOWARD PERU. NOW THAT THE PROBLEM HAS SURFACED, AMBASSADOR TRUCCO CAN INDICATE THE GOC'S CONCERN AND ASK WHAT THE USG INTENDS TO DO ABOUT PERU. AND THE CHILEAN MILITARY CAN TRY TO GET THE USG INVOLVED IN SMOKING OUT WHAT SEEM TO US EXAGGERATED IDEAS OF AN EVEN CLOSER PERUVIAN RELATIONSHIP TO THE USSR (DAO/SANTIAGO IR 6817 0209 76).

5. WE BELIEVE THE CHILEANS HAVE DECIDED AGAINST A DIRECT APPROACH TO PERU. THEY PROBABLY BELIEVE IT WOULD HAVE LITTLE EFFECT, COMING FROM A DISADVANTAGED POTENTIAL ADVERSARY, AND THEY DO NOT WANT TO GIVE THE GOP FURTHER REASON TO BREAK OFF SECRET

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OR STALL THEIR BILATERAL TALKS ON THE BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR. THE CHILEANS THEREFORE PROBABLY WOULD IGNORE OUR ADVICE TO GO DIRECTLY TO THE PERUVIANS. IF THEY DID APPROACH LIMA, THEY MIGHT SAY THEY WERE DOING SO AT OUR SUGGESTION. THIS APPROACH THEREFORE DOES NOT APPEAR FRUITFUL TO US.

6. DISSUASION BY ANDEAN COUNTRIES: BERGUNO TOLD US THAT OTHER ANDEAN PACT COUNTRIES ARE CONCERNED OVER PERU'S

PROSPECTIVE BUY. BUT CHILE'S CURRENT STANDOFF WITH ITS PACT PARTNERS MAKES IT IMPRACTICAL FOR CHILE TO WORK THROUGH THEM AGAINST PERU. IT SEEMS TO US A SLIM CHANCE, BUT THE DEPARTMENT MIGHT CONSIDER TRYING ITSELF TO WORK ON PERU THROUGH OTHER ANDEAN REGION COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA--AND PERHAPS BRAZIL.

7. US AND PERU: IF THE USG IS SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN STOPPING THE PERUVIAN ARMS DEAL, THEN THE HARD DECISION TO ACT PROBABLY HAS TO BE MADE IN WASHINGTON. IT IS CLEARLY IN THE US INTEREST TO PREVENT A FURTHER INCREASE IN SOVIET INFLUENCE IN SOUTH AMERICA AND IN THE ALREADY UNBALANCED PERU-CHILE ARMS RATION, WITH THE POTENTIAL FOR INSECURITY IN THE SOUTHERN CONE THESE DEVELOPMENTS WOULD REPRESENT. WE WOULD BE LOATHE TO SUGGEST A COUNTER-OFFER TO PERU OF US AIRCRAFT AT THIS STAGE; WE WOULD NOT LIKE TO SEE PERU PLAYING US OFF AGAINST THE USSR IN THIS WAY. NOR WOULD WE WISH IN THIS WAY TO CONTRIBUTE DIRECTLY TO INCREASING PERU'S EXISTING ADVANTAGE OVER CHILE IN MILITARY MATERIEL.

8. THUS A DEMARCHE IN LIMA MAY BE INDICATED, IF THERE IS STILL TIME, AND IF THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS IT ADVISABLE IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT TRENDS IN US-PERUVIAN RELATIONS. CONCEIVABLY, TOO, THE SUBJECT MIGHT FIGURE IN OUR ONGOING CONVERSATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS ON ISSUES BEARING ON DETENTE, WORLD-WIDE.
POPPER UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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